**The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation**

Mark Hathaway & Leonardo Boff

Pg xiii “Global capitalism is concerned with electronic networks of financial and information flows; ecodesign, with ecological networks of energy and material flows. The goal of the global economy, ... [at present], is to maximize the wealth and power of its elites; the goal of ecodesign is to maximize the sustainability of the web of life. These two scenarios are on a collision course.”

*The challenge is to change the value system*

Pg xiv “global capitalism... is unsustainable... its underlying principle, that making money should take precedence over human rights, democracy, environmental protection, or any other value, is a recipe for disaster...The critical issue is politics... a shift from finding out what we can extract from nature to what we can learn from it”

Pg xvii “we are called to reinvent ourselves as a species... The first step is understanding the.. . obstacles ... the second is the formulation of a cosmology... sufficiently entrancing that will sustain us in the transformation of the human project.” “obstacles include the illusion of unlimited growth..., excessive corporate power, a parasitic financial system, and a tendency to monopolize knowledge and impose... monocultures of the mind... reinforced by systems of education, mass media, consumerism, and artificial environments...”

Pg xxiii “Tao, meaning a way or path leading to harmony, peace, and right relationship...the wisdom that lies at the very heart of the universe...[it conjures] the image of a process that puts wisdom into practice – a kind of praxis... walking wisdom”

Pg xxiv “the Aramaic word used by Jesus... Malkuta (the kingdom) – referst o “the ruling principles that guide our lives toward unity and conjures the image of a fruitful arm poised to create”

Pg xxv “Liberation is the process of moving toward a world where all human beings can live with dignity in harmony with the great community of beings who make up the Gaia, the living earth... it is about realizing the potential of human beings as creative, life enhancing participants within the unfolding evolution of Gaia.”

“liberation in a cosmic perspective [is] the process through which the universe seeks to realize its own potential as it drives toward greater differentiation, interiority (self-organization, consciousness), and communion (community).

Xxvi “the same forces and ideologies that exploit an exclude the poor are also devastating the entire life community of the Earth”

Pg 2 “our planet is experiencing one of the greatest mass extinctions of our time”

Pg 3 inability to change is due to “lack of political will and ... many of us choose simply to push [dangers] out of mind because of fear.”

*When fear is the motivator for conservation we turn away from the will of life perhaps...*

*-note frog sitting in hot water as temp rises is a good analogy of our current state*

Pg 7 “We must remember that the very fact that these crises are our own making means that there is hope of addressing them in a meaningful way... We can choose life...If we have the will, we have the means to control human population, to dismantle weapons and to deflect wars, and give everyone a voice in democratic self-governance”

Pg 8 *Crisis comes from combination of danger an opportunity*

*We are called to wake up and adopt a whole new reality of relationship to our world... similar to Christ of the Celts that declares Jesus as a deep call to renew the way we are supposed to be living.*

Pg 9 “Capitalism is rooted both in patriarchy (domination of women by men) and anthropocentrism (domination of nature by humanity)... in order to overcome the psycho-spiritual impediments to transformation, we ...[must] acknowledge our fears, build community, and nurture creativity and solidarity...[we must live at a] much deeper and richer level of being (in connection) than is common in most modern societies.”

Pg 10 “ecology.. refers to study of the home”

*Chapter 2* ***We are sustaining a pathological system that creates poverty and inequality, depletes the earth, poisons life, unsustainable growth, distorted development, corporate rule, parasitic finance, limiting monocultures, and wealth for the few from a violent domination of the many – the capitalistic diseconomy must change***

Pg 29 “if the economic growth rate of poor nations were doubled, only seven would close the gap with the rich nations in the next century”

pg 32 “GDP is little more than a measure of the rate we are turning resources into garbage”

pg 36 “the culturally biased project of removing perceived poverty destroys wholesome an sustainable lifestyles and creates real material poverty, or misery, by the denial of survival needs themselves, through the diversion of resources to resource intensive commodity production...”

pg 37 “the Western development enterprise has been about separating people from their traditional means of livelihood an breaking down the bonds of security provided by family and community to create dependence on the jobs and products that modern corporations produce”

pg 45 “we are being driven to dependence on detached and unaccountable corporations”

pg 49 “the world’s parasitic financial system continues to suck the poor and the Earth itself dry, insiting that whatever wealth can be extracted be used to enrich the financial economy”

“economics is oikonomia, the art of caring and managing the household – the community, a society or the Earth”

*we must choose between empire and true economics*

*pg 58 Empire/Industrial Growth society (*Life is hostile and competitive, humans are flawed and dangerous, order by dominator hierarchy, compete or die, love power, defend the rights of self, masculine dominant

*Earth Community*/Economics (Life is supportive and cooperative, humans have many possibilities, order through partnership, cooperate and live, love life, defend the rights of all/mutual responsibilities, gender balanced)

Pg 56 “Only the health and diversity of the web of life have real value. Activities that undermine this – including the destruction of life to accumulate capital – are evils, not goods. All activities is ultimately gauged by its long-term, enduring value”  *Question to ask when making a choice: does it improve health or diversity?*

Pg 61 “The U.S. and U.S.S.R. spent over $10 trillion on the cold war, enough money to replace the infrastructure of the world...we bought and sold the entire world in order to defeat a political movement”

Pg 65 “Anthropocentrism= belief that humans alone have intrinsic value...”everything is valueable insofar as it serves human interests. “lies at the heart of our current anti-ecological understanding of economics” *language of raw materials suggests we are above the earth*

Pg 66 “Anthropocentrism irrational because: 1. Not consistent with scientific reality 2. Leads to [bad] practice 3. No sharp division exists 4. Leads to closed logic”

Pg 67 “anthropoharmonic...developing a profound respect and love for all life... such a shift...calls humanity to put aside the quest for acquisition, consumption, and domination,...instead seek out... security, love, community in harmony with the ...ecosphere”

Pg 74 Human dependence on the hospitality of the Earth is total”

Pg 79 we need a “renewed understanding of work. The aim of the human endeavour is no longer... accumulation, but rather the enhancement of the life process and human happiness...work must first and foremost be purposeful, something useful and necessary for the production or sustenance of life”

Pg 80 “Nothing in the world \ is as soft and yielding as water.\ Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible, \ nothing can surpass it.\ The soft overcomes the hard; \ the gentle overcomes the rigid. \ Everyone knows this is true,\ but few can put it into practice”

Pg 81 Power – “that which enables”

Types: 1**. Power Over** “power that restricts or controls... power backed by the gun,... by force,... coercion, manipulation, control motivated at some level by fear” “enables 1 group/individual over another”

2. pg 82 **Power-from-within** “power that sustains all life: power of creativity, healing, and...love.” “empowerment” “power inherent in seeds...to spring forth life” *kingdom of heaven mustard seed power?* “Aramaic [Jesus used], hayye translates to “life-force” or “the primal energy that pervades the cosmos”

3. **Power-with** “power that enables us to act in concert and to form participatory organizations.” “subtle,... fluid...dependent on personal responsibility...creativity...and willingness of others to respond”

Pg 83 “Power-from-within could be represented as the nodes from which power originates; power with as the lines that link together individuals and groups through influence; and power –over as barriers blocking relationships of power-with while stifling the exercise of power-from-within”

Pg 85 “Awareness is the beginning of all resistance. We can only resist domination by becoming and remaining conscious: conscious of the self, conscious of the way reality is constructed around us, conscious of each seemingly insignificant choice we make, conscious that we are, in fact, making choices”

Pg 85 “Shake off the spell”

Pg 87 “The world could be changed. But one of the major reasons it stays the way it is is because of our deep belief... that nothing can or will change...the ruling classes rule by consent- they have managed to get the active participation of the people they rule in the process of policing the established order. We become our own jail-keepers.” “if we can...confront our internalized powerlessness...[and] break out of the jails...constructed in our won psyches, the prospects for changing the current political, cultural, and economic systems are greatly improved” “powers of domination do not wield an absolute power”

Pg 88 “pathology [falls] into one of three ‘poisons’: aversion, addiction, or delusion”

Aversion: avoidance, anger, fear, defensiveness, or aggression -> denial and internalized oppression

Addiction: all form of greed and attachment...attempt to fill the emptiness of lives lived in delusion with something...that will ease the pain of hopelessness. Pg 94 “to be human is to be able to envision,...see literally, and to empathize...addiction is fundamentally dehumanizing”

Delusion: despair “we amy seek a false escape in addctions, or we may express our frustration and anger through irrational, aggressive forms of behaviour”

Pg 92 “The very danger signals that should rivet our attention...tend to have the opposite effect. They make us want to pull down the blinds and busy ourselves with other things”

Pg 95 “The mind pays for its deadening to the state of the world by giving up its capacity for joy and flexibility”

Pg 104 “Cosmology = a vision of the nature of reality and the purpose of life...the advertisement is the modern cosmological story...it tells you everything that matters: ...the nature of the universe? Storehouse of materials. Nature of the human? Get a job and buy commodities. The ideal human? Someone hanging out by the pool drinking a Pepsi and laughing” *clever*

Pg 106 “the hollow cosmology of consumerism ...never really manages to quench our yearnings for communion, creativity, and beauty.”

Pg 113 “the body is in the soul”... “our bodies are constantly exchanging materials... 98% of atoms in our bodies are replaced every year....over half of our dry body weight is made up of nonhuman cells...individuals are dynamic, open systems”

Pg 115 *to escape the prison of detachment and identity we need to widen circles of compassion*

“Beauty, Wonder, and compassion... need to be reawakened”

*Celtic Christianity concept of sin/Jesus’ salvation of Jesus coming to reawaken our sense of what true life is about*

pg 116 “My thoughts will all be beautiful, my words will all be beautiful, my actions will all be beautiful, as I walk my life the Beautiful Way.”

pg 117-119 “From paralysis to reconnection” *1. Become Aware* -beauty and joy first, pain and suffering second “open ourselves to a reality that includes beauty and joy… fear and pain 2. Acknowledge effect of Awareness and “stay present in the flow of pain…facing our despair and anguish …is necessary for growing” 3. Share “we can never hope to transform our way of being human in the world without the support and challenge of others committed to the same struggle”

pg 124 “Community must be the context in which we seek to heal and challenge each other toward new ways of being.”

*we need to develop will*

“the development of will enables us to act freely in accord with our own deepest nature rather than under external compulsion…”

pg125 “Five stages…” 1. Clear vision or goal 2. Deliberation/discernment 3. Affirmation 4. Planning 5. Directing and execution

pg 126 “Creativity happens in the psyche when our consciousness moves from being human-centred to creation-centred…It makes mysticism possible and rescues us from an anthropocentric world view.”

**Part 2 Cosmology and Liberation**

pg 130 “Cosmology is the myth underlying the way we live…it profoundly colours our perception of reality, including our assumptions about the nature of change... a cosmological image is the frame of order of the psyche...our inner world. Everything we know or imagine is contained within it” (136

“paradigm is a constellation of concepts “

pg 132 Characteristics of traditional cosmologies

**1. A myth of creation implies both a beginning and a purpose for the cosmos.**

**2. Nature, including the earth and cosmos, is a living interconnected web”.**

**3. Humans are part of nature. A strong ethic of respect pervades human interaction with other creatures. Nature is something to be honored – even reverenced – not subdued, exploited, or even ‘developed’.**

**4. Land is understood holistically, not as a piece of ‘dirt’ but as a community of living beings. Therefore, land cannot be owned but is rather held in common. People do not own the land – they belong to it.**

**5. Human society values a sense of kinship, inclusion, cooperation, and reciprocity rather than competition and personal economic gain.**

**6. Time is viewed as circular or cyclic, rather than as linear. Time follows the flow of the seasons and the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth.**

**7. The purpose of life is conceived in terms of harmony, balance, and sustainability rather than in terms of progress, growth, or economic development.**

pg 135 “In objectifying the world... we have also become objects”

pg 137 “As a result of losing a living cosmology that could genuinely sustain and nourish our spirits, we have grasped instead to fill the void within with the surrogate cosmology of acquisition and consumption. In the process we can no longer hear the voice of the trees, the mountains, the rivers… nor can we hear the cries of the poor and marginalized… we have become filled with despair and have lost a vision that could inspire and motivate us to confront the mounting crises around us”

pg 138 “we need a new vision of the cosmos to inspire and guide the profound transformations that are required for the survival of complex life on earth...that recaptures...humanity” as part of “a living cosmos imbue with spirit”

pg 150 “It is fear of the labyrinthine flux and complexity of phenomena that has driven men to philosophy, to science, to theology – fear of the complex reality driving them to invent simpler, more manageable, and therefore, consoling, fiction”, such as the comforting fiction of a clockwork universe reducible to inert atoms.”

pg 157 “If we imagine the universe as ‘it’ – a universe of ‘dead matter and blind force’ – something in us goes dead and blind. We can engage without remorse...in the wholesale destruction of nature.

pg 180 “We live in a cosmos whose foundations are built on deep rooted... relationality... Cause and effect are neither linear nor local, nor are they simply random; instead they are both mysterious and creative.”

pg 182 “the entire universe is continually flickering in and out of existence at each moment... Reality is a kind of vibration arising from the pregnant void, waves on a vast ocean of energy... the super essential darkness of God that is the ground of all being”

**pg 191 “The key to effective action lies not in the power to dominate and control, but rather in holding the right intention and in discerning the right action at the right time and place”**

pg 192 “Physics tells us that a rock is composed of a vast number of atoms. And these same atoms, which at the quantum level... are enfolded in ambiguity, conspire to engage in a great dance whose collective manifestation is a rock. The rock is pure dance. Its very rockiness, its inertness, its whole inner voice, are the manifestation of this constant movement and flux”

pg 202 “To understand things systematically literally means to put them into a context, to establish the nature of their relationships” Greek synhistanai = “to place together”

pg 209 **Isolated observation does not exist** “What we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning... seen from the perspective of our own unique place in the wider system of which, we, too, are a part.”

pg 211 “nonlinear dynamics of living systems produce an extremely complex relationship between cause and effect...causality... is not linear and unidirectional, but reciprocal – or ...circular. Outcomes are determined less by inputs than by the complex dynamics of the system itself....”

pg 212 “in the systems view, order is not imposed from above, by mind exerting its will on dumb material forces, it is intrinsic to the self organizing nature of the phenomenal world itself.... Our ability to affect reality no longer depends on the brute force of our input, but on the subtle webs of relationality inherent in the exercise of power-with”

pg 216 “good” (taba) = “ripe”, “evil” (bisha) = “unripe/rotten” so “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil = “let us not be deluded by superficiality or seduced by appearances, but free us from inappropriate (unfruitful) actions”

pg 222 Memory occurs through morphic resonance = “transmission of formative casual influences through both space and time” via morphic ‘fields’

pg 244 “To the extent that we try to live in new ways that model the future we wish to create, we begin to create new habits and ways of being that make it progressively easier for others to do likewise”

pg 251 “Creation does not happen once and for all time; rather, creativity is an ongoing process that manifests as a series of stages or steps”

pg 259 “theory of symbiogenesis implies a radical shift of perception. Conventional theory sees the unfolding of life as a process in which species only diverge from one another, [symbiogenesis] suggests the formation of new composite entities through the symbiosis of formerly independent organisms has been more powerful and more important evolutionary force.”

“Every multicellular organism, is a kind of close-knit confederacy of diverse organisms”

pg 260 “we need to reinterpret the idea of ‘survival of the fittest’ to mean the ability not to kill and destroy other species but rather to fit in well and contribute to the rest of the biotic community.”

Pg 277 “there is no blueprint, …no clear, defined goal, but there is a dynamic of allurement… that is drawing the cosmos in a certain direction…we are not merely a cosmic accident. In some sense, the universe has been striving…to give birth to us”

Pg278 “cosmogenic principle states that the evolution of the universe will be characterized by differentiation, autopoiesis, and communion…the basic drive of evolution is to increase depth…”

Pg 279“principle metaphor is that of an organism (not a machine)…essence of reality lies not in substances but in systems… always in relationship to something else… atoms have dissolved into effervescent whirlpools of pure relationality…matter is no longer…dead or inert; rather, all of reality is in some sense alive.”

*Creative emergence takes place over deterministic or random results* “In complex systems, nothing can be predicted with certainty…yet things are not [entirely random either but] characterized by attractors.”

Pg 280 “the observer is always related to what is observed…knowledge… is in some sense bound up with love for what we desire to know.”

Pg 281 “three key characteristics mark the cosmic story of evolution: differentiation, autopoiesis, and communion…Were there no differentiation, the universe would collapse into a homogenous smudge; were there no subjectivity (autopoiesis), the universe would collapse into inert, dead, extension; were there no communion, the universe would collapse into isolated singularities of being.”

Pg 283 “The primeval fireball is lost forever. Our sun will perish in five billion years, forever. The dinosaurs were magnificent creatures. They had their day. Without the elimination of the dinosaurs, the mammals would never have developed… So, too, the mammals will have to deal with the demands of the universe. We must embrace loss as an ultimate reality.

Evil is the demand that loss is not real. Our society has organized itself for the denial of that reality…The denial of loss is the refusal to enter into the sacrificial event of the universe. If loss is embraced, every moment of our lives is understood as disappearing into the ongoing story of the universe. Our creativity is energizing the whole. While it can be difficult to embrace the reality of loss, with it comes the possibility of constant renewal and change, including authentic liberation.”

Pg 286 “We are part and parcel of this immense intelligence, this Spirit-in-action, this God-in-the-making…Evolution is both God and Goddess, transcendence and immanence. It is imminent in the process itself, wove into the fabric of the Kosmos; but it everywhere transcends its own productions, and brings forth anew in every moment”

*See Meister Eckhart (xian mystic)… This evolution can be seen in Jesus, how he choose to live is imminent but through his death/loss/resurrection, every moment he is brought forth anew in our understanding…*

Pg 287 “In the very first instant when the primitive particles rushed forth, every one of them was connected to every other one in the entire universe. At no time in the future existence of the universe will they ever arrive at a point of disconnection. Alienation for a particle is a theoretical impossibility. For galaxies, too, relationships are the fact of existence. Each galaxy is directly connected to the hundred billion galaxies of the universe, and there will never come a time when a galaxy’s destiny does not involve each of the galaxies of the universe. **Nothing is itself without everything else.**”

Pg 292 “the conscious participation of humanity in the movement toward greater diversity, interiority (life giving expressions of creativity), and communion [is a definition of] the process of liberation.”

Pg 293 “In our…brief history…we have reinvented ourselves time and time again. We were born in the forests and savannahs of Africa, but were able to adapt…in the ice age. We began as hunter-gatherers, moved on to become farmers, and then reinvented ourselves as industrial, city-dwelling people. We…can reinvent ourselves…again.

“We must learn to:

-embrace limits, definitively renouncing the pseudo cosmology of consumerism and the economics of growth

- find our meaning and fulfillment in our active participation in the rocess of cosmic evolution… (“dream of the earth”)

-deepen our communion with our living planet, the material and psychic source of our sustenance

- seek out a new kind of ethics based on care and the enhancement of life, creativity, and beauty”

Pg 298 “We will not make the changes we need to by cultivating guilt or by shaming people into action….we will be able to remake humanity only if we are passionately drawn toward a new way of living in the world… Beauty, awe, and wonder along with a deep love for all living things must be central sources of energy in the struggle to come” *ethics of beauty over ethics of duty are required for our evo.*

Pg 304 “Each being expresses the Creator…. Each being, especially living beings, is a bearer of this excellence “regardless of its worth to human beings”.

Pg 306 “To care with love is to feel united with the most distant star, with our brother bird, and with our sister ant, and to be able to declare with emotion: ‘You are infinitely important to me; you cannot suffer unjustly; you cannot disappear; you must live.” *we need to adapt an ethic of respect and care which will cause peace* ***on*** *Earth and* ***with*** *Earth* (see The Earth Charter)